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C O N F I D E N T I A L THE HAGUE 001262

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TAGS: PREL IZ NL UNSC

SUBJECT: NETHERLANDS/IRAQ: DUTCH SUPPORT DRAFT RESOLUTION
AND FURTHER CONSULTATIONS

REF: A. STATE 116099

1B. THE HAGUE 1210 (NOTAL)

Classified By: AMBASSADOR CLIFFORD SOBEL FOR REASONS 1.5(B) AND (D).

11. (C) SUMMARY: The Dutch government has reacted positively to the draft UN Security Resolution on Iraq. In a May 25 meeting with Ambassador Sobel, Hugo Siblesz (MFA Political Director) said that the draft resolution would help build strong Parliamentary support for a decision to extend Dutch troops. The Dutch hope that their remaining questions concerning the chain of command and the roles of various authorities after the transfer of sovereignty will be addressed in side letters if not in the resolution itself. Siblesz also pressed for continuing consultations, including between military authorities, in the lead-up to June 30. END SUMMARY.

12. (U) The Dutch Government reacted positively to the circulation of a draft UN Security Council Resolution on Iraq on May 24. Foreign Minister Bot told the press that the draft included "all the elements we find important" and stated that the Netherlands would be satisfied if the text went forward without changes. Bert Bakker, the D66 (Center-left, coalition) party foreign affairs spokesman in parliament reacted more cautiously, saying that details regarding the exact role of the UN needed additional clarification, but still described the resolution as a step in the right direction. PvdA (labor, opposition) party spokesman Koenders acknowledged that the text contained positive elements, but said that he remained skeptical about its lack of specificity regarding Iraqi sovereignty and the future role of the UN. (Post has distributed copies of the text resolution (ref a) and the President's May 24 speech to senior party leaders and the Prime Minister's office.)

13. (C) On May 25, Ambassador Sobel personally delivered the draft resolution text and a copy of the President's speech to Hugo Siblesz, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Political Director. Siblesz stressed that the Dutch were pleased with the draft text, and suggested that it would help the GONL make its case in Parliament for extending Dutch troops in Iraq. He noted that all the "relevant ministers" were already firmly on board for an extension, but the draft resolution should go a long way towards satisfying the previously stated concerns of junior coalition partners D66 (ref b). Even the PvdA, he suggested, would find it difficult to mount a strong challenge to an extension under these circumstances. He cautioned, however, that the Abu Ghraib revelations would probably influence the tone of the debate in parliament, if not the final outcome.

14. (C) Siblesz noted that several specific issues related to deployment of forces in Iraq were not addressed in the resolution. He hoped that they would be directly addressed in side letters between coalition authorities and the UN. For example, Siblesz said that Dutch military officials needed clarification regarding relations between the MNF and nascent Iraqi military forces, as well as among the Iraqi authorities themselves. Relations between the Dutch military forces and local authorities in Al Muthanna, he noted, were good -- how would they be affected by the transfer of sovereignty to a national Iraqi government? Similarly, a clear delineation of how policing and security duties would be transferred from coalition forces to Iraqis would be helpful.

15. (C) Ambassador Sobel asked Siblesz whether he had found the recent meeting of POLDIRS in Washington useful. Siblesz agreed that it had been a productive exercise and pressed for additional consultations in the leadup to the transfer of sovereignty. Consultations between military authorities, he added, would be especially helpful in resolving the issues mentioned above. It was also always useful for the GONL to be able to demonstrate to parliament that serious consultations, with real give and take, were taking place with the United States.

16. (C) In conclusion, Ambassador Sobel stressed we would be looking to the Dutch and other coalition partners to help generate support for the resolution with other European UNSC members, especially France and Germany. Siblesz agreed that

achieving a positive outcome in New York was a shared interest and that the Dutch would keep a close eye on developments there.

SOBEL